



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Jesernig announces plans to leave Department of Agriculture

OLYMPIA – State Department of Agriculture Director Jim Jesernig today announced plans to leave the agency late this fall, departing a cabinet post he has held since 1993. Jesernig was first appointed to head the Department of Agriculture by former Gov. Mike Lowry and was re-appointed by Gov. Gary Locke.

"Jim has been a great advocate for farmers, ranchers and the entire agricultural community," said Gov. Locke. "Jim has worked diligently to remind government at all levels and the general public about the importance of agriculture as the foundation of this state's economy."

Jesernig will be joining the Perkins Coie law firm in Olympia, working on public policy issues. Perkins Coie, headquartered in Seattle, is the Northwest's largest law firm with more than 500 lawyers serving clients from offices throughout the United States and Asia.

During his tenure at the Department of Agriculture, Jesernig has worked vigorously to support the agricultural community. He has fought for budgets that supported critical department activities and the marketing of Washington's diverse crops and has worked with interest groups and all levels of government to help shape policies that affect the state's agricultural industry.

Prior to joining the state Department of Agriculture, Jesernig, a native of Kennewick, served the southeast Washington farming communities of the 8th Legislative District for seven years as state senator and representative. He was Senate majority floor leader in 1993.

Current priorities for Jesernig and his executive management team include working with constituents to shape the federal farm bill and developing a strategy to keep agriculture viable in Western and Eastern Washington.

As president of the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Jesernig will be hosting a meeting of state agriculture directors and commissioners in August in the Tri-Cities. The group will discuss national farm policies and learn more about the importance of the Snake River dams for regional power supplies and for transporting many of the nation's commodities for export.

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